

5<sup>th</sup> Edition

BARI, FIERA DEL LEVANTE, 7<sup>TH</sup> – 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2008

**WHERE**

Bari, Fiera del Levante trade fair

**WHEN**

From the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008

**PARTNERS**

**ORGANISERS**

Promoter and source of funding

**Apulian Regional Government**

Ecology Agency

Culture Agency

Mediterranean Agency

Food Resources Agency

Economic Development Agency

Tourism and Hotel Industry Agency

Transport and Communications Infrastructure Agency

Promoter of the event and overall organisers

**Federparchi, the Italian Parks Federation**

**INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED**

with contributions from:

Italian Ministry for the Environment and the Protection of Land and Sea

in association with

Ente Fiera del Levante

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute, Bari

Bari Municipality

Bari Province

Acquedotto Pugliese

**GUEST OF HONOUR**

Our guest of honour at the 2008 edition will be Albania, given its proximity to Apulia and the range of ongoing cooperation programs with our closest Balkan neighbours. Indeed, the “**Waiting for Mediterre**” event will be held in the Albanian capital, Tirana, in March 2008.

The central theme of the event will be a cooperation project for ecotourism in the Albanian Alps in the northern county of Shkodër, under the auspices of the **UNDP (United Nations Development Agency)**'s IDEASS – ART GOLD framework and brings together the Albanian Government's Tourism and Environment

ministries, Federparchi and its affiliate *Compagnia dei Parchi*, as well as other international charities and donors.

## WHO IS MEDITERRE FOR?

MEDITERRE is aimed at national and local authorities, conservation agencies, scientific and research institutions, enterprises and associations working to protect the natural environment of the Mediterranean basin.

The various exhibitors will have the opportunity to publicise the natural attractions, tourist facilities, cultural riches and typical products of their protected areas, as well as their “best practices” in protecting nature and the environment. MEDITERRE thus aims to be a unique international opportunity, a time to compare points of view, and this has already led to a series of new strategies and approaches to help build a more sustainable habitat for all of the inhabitants of this planet.

As well as being an exhibition space, MEDITERRE is also an arena for meetings and debates, with the participation of a range of institutions, agencies and professionals in the nature conservation sector; additionally, a series of conferences and seminars is currently being drawn up.

## THE 5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF MEDITERRE

### Event category

There will be four different types of event at Mediterre 2008: **conventions, workshops, exhibition stands and side events.**

The innovation for this edition lies in a series of theme-based workshops on the various funding channels available to projects in the environmental sector. The aim is to create an information point, a place to bring together experts in the field and conservation agencies for the management of protected areas, to look into the various opportunities provided both by international cooperation funds and by structural funds in the environment sector. It will be a sort of “stock exchange” which will help to unite various partners on the basis of their environmental features and territorial resources, and to identify new areas of European legislation that reward mutually-compatible territorial initiatives. The session will be called “Laboratorio Natura” (“Nature Workshop”), and will also give companies working in the sector a showcase for their services and products. For exhibitors, the event will be an excellent opportunity not just to show off their unique selling point at the trade fair, but also to identify business prospects in the nature-conservation and environment-protection sectors.

This year's cultural and scientific events program will be even more comprehensive, thanks to the participation of several Apulian regional government agencies (i.e. Culture, Mediterranean, Food Resources, and Tourism & Hotel Industry) and to an area dedicated to other strategic sectors for the environment, such as energy from renewable sources and waste recycling.

### The theme for 2008: Earth, Water, Fire.

An opportunity to reflect on the value of our environmental resources and on the global ecological crisis that is threatening to undermine them.

The devastating fires which raged throughout the summer of 2007 highlighted what is a disastrous environmental and economic situation, but these are just the most evident and frightening sides to an alteration of the ecological balance which affects vast areas within the Mediterranean basin. Cause – and also effect – of these processes is, in a fatally flawed schema, the phenomenon of desertification, which afflicts almost 40% of the Earth above sea level.

Uncontrolled water usage, the impoverishment of farmland, livestock pressure and a whole range of human activities which savagely rape the land and its natural resources – once these processes have begun, they risk causing a boomerang effect, unlocking a chain of uncontrolled events. For example, the depletion of groundwater in aquifers and the effects of desertification on agricultural production, or the damaging effects on tourism caused by images of wildfires.

In such a scenario, even though protected areas are the target of thoughtless attacks, once again they can provide advanced territorial-management models and offer experimental approaches to prevention mechanisms, not only through technology but also by raising social awareness and involvement.

The event also provides an opportunity to base separate discussion groups on each of the three elements in the title, with the participation of illustrious names in the Mediterranean's scientific and cultural worlds. Below is a first draft of the topics on which to reflect.

## **Earth**

As if in a negative image, it is the land that traces the profile of the Mediterranean Basin. Where sea and land come together lies the system of coasts; more than just a frontier land, this is a place with a hugely-rich biodiversity. Here in this intricate grid of habitats, multifarious species interact, giving rise to a complex ecological system, which is a valuable genetic heritage. The coasts also mirror the vulnerability of our Sea, threatened by increasing population pressure, a fact highlighted by a dossier on the health of the Mediterranean, produced by UNEP-MAP (United Nations Environment Programme - Mediterranean Action Plan). Erosion of the coastline, rising sea-levels and building development threaten the balance of this outstanding treasure. This makes the coastal system the ideal physical location for experimenting with forms of integrated management between the various environmental entities – such as the sea, wetlands and internal areas – and a matter for debate between the various interest groups, to reconcile the needs of nature conservation with those of the social and economic development of the human populations.

## **Water**

Closely connected with coastal defence is the maintenance of the Mediterranean's inland waters, made up of great river basins, and wetlands located at their estuaries. These river systems are an outstanding repository of biodiversity, and through siltation they have always managed to achieve a balance by counteracting coastal erosion processes. Fluvial deposits have made a significant contribution to shaping the landscape of the Mediterranean. What is more, rivers and lagoons are ecological islands, which have now also been recognised for their economic value, in terms both of the benefits they bring to surrounding areas and of the environmental services they provide. However, continual tampering with this balance – by dam-building, uncontrolled catchment or artificially altering river beds – reduces the flow in rivers and streams, and this has huge repercussions both on the ecological balance of the riverine habitat, and on the physical balance of the coastlines, which are gradually being eroded.

To complete the picture, there will also be discussions from an anthropological point of view on how rivers affect the social and economic organisation of human populations in river basins.

## **Fire**

The cult of fire has always played an ambivalent role in the history of mankind and in our relationship with the natural world. Ever since the dawn of classical Greek mythology, with the legend of Prometheus, who gave fire to Man, the metaphor associated with this sacred element has remained unchanged: a source of life and regeneration, that at the same time has become a powerful tool of destruction. The history of the Mediterranean is full of episodes highlighting the destructive effects of fire: from the fires which several times razed the ancient city of Troy to the ground, to the Roman sacking of Carthage in 146 BC, from the great fire of Roma during the reign of the Emperor Nerone, to the recurring fires which devastated the famous library in Alexandria. Now that its military use has diminished, fire has become the means for attacking our natural heritage, attacks carried out by those who wish to build on such land, or to turn woodland into grazing land. Also, the sheer size of the areas involved and the systematic effect of the flames prevent the natural process of regeneration of woodland ecosystems, thus further exacerbating the soil erosion process. The scale of this phenomenon is so vast that a co-ordinated joint effort is required between countries facing similar problems. The debate will thus be able to compare and contrast experiences from various parts of the Mediterranean, focusing on the legislation, the preventive measures and the restoration techniques needed for fire-scarred habitats.

## **CONTACTS**

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